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ABSTRACT

Discusses kindergarten in Finland during the past 100 years. There are over 2,400 kindergartens in Finland, and these attend to over 100,000 children. The kindergartens, which are part of the day care system, use methods based on the teachings of Friedrich Frobel. The general goal of kindergartens is to support the family in bringing up the child and join with the home in promoting the development of the child's personality. Kindergartens are of six types: (1) standard kindergartens; (2) kindergartens for school children; (3) special day care; (4) open kindergartens; (5) roving kindergartens; and (6) 24-hour kindergartens. Family day care includes care offered at the child minder's home, three-family day care, and group family day care. Play activity involves play clubs, playgrounds, and toy libraries. The Finnish government has decided that by 1990, all families with children under three years should be able to send their children to a kindergarten or receive home-care support. Home-care support offers the parent the possibility of taking care of the child until it turns three. The law also ensures that the parent will not lose his or her employment during this period. (RJC)

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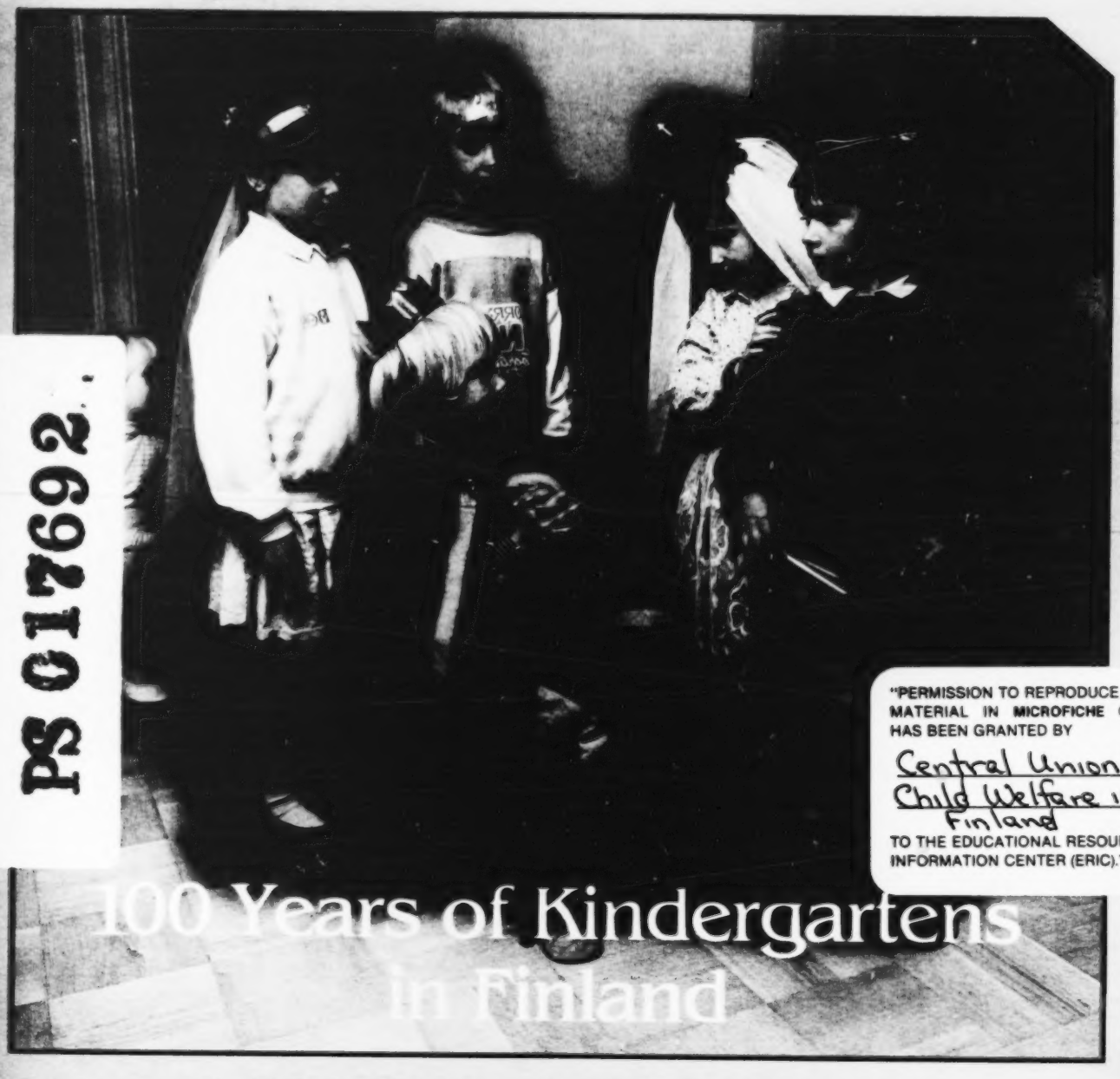
CHILDREN



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100 Years of Kindergartens in Finland

A Special Issue Published by the Central Union for Child Welfare and the Association of Kindergarten Teachers

100 YEARS AGO

Young and unpretentious Hanna Rothman left her home to study in Berlin and came back after having finished her studies, to open the first kindergarten in Finland

One-hundred years ago, in 1888, Hanna Rothman founded Finland's first kindergarten for poor working-class children in Helsinki. Things got off to a difficult start at the beginning. Rothman's ad in the newspaper didn't attract a single child. Instead, she was forced to get her first pupils from the streets and parks. However, in a very short time there were long lines at kindergarten doors, and they still exist today even though over 2,400 kindergartens have been built in Finland.
Finland was the first Scandinavian country to offer day-care services.
Nationally, 1988 has been a celebration year for day care. The Association of Kindergarten Teachers in Finland, who will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 1989, commemorated the centennial happening with the theme, "Children Always Imply a Big Responsibility."

Throughout Finland there have been numerous happenings and events. Many municipalities have paid tribute to the anniversary; for example, the city of Helsinki has organized throughout the year a number of events with the motto, "One-Hundred Years on One's Lap".

From their founding, Finnish kindergartens have adhered to high standards in child upbringing and educational methods. These methods are based on the teachings of Friedrich Fröbel.
Fröbel put the core idea of kindergartens in the following words: "Their aim is not only to keep an eye on children but to give incentives that match the child's age and being, strengthens their bodies, trains their senses, keeps active their awakening spirit as well as acquaints them to nature and society. An especially important goal should be to lead their heart and mind to the sources of life and to a perfect balance with themselves".
The goals in child upbringing have not changed that much during the past one-hundred years, even though teaching methods and kindergarten material have throughout the years.
Keeping with Fröbel's ideal, play, work and teaching are the cornerstone of Finnish early-childhood education. At kindergartens, learning happens through human and humane circumstances, not so much with the help of teaching and learning aides. The traditional goal has been to give children at kindergartens a home-like atmosphere where the individual traits of each child are taken into consideration, as well as the switching from play to work.

Kindergarten offers both parents the possibility to seek employment outside the home. Eighty percent of parents of Finnish under-school-aged children are employed. Contrary to other Scandinavian countries, their mothers are mostly full-time employees because of the scarcity of part-time jobs in Finland. From 1988, new flexible working hours make it possible for parents with under-school-aged children and for those with children that begin their first year at elementary school, to shorten their working day to six hours. Furthermore, it is likely that Finnish women will continue to work outside the home in the upcoming years because their educational level is constantly increasing. Already now, around 60 % of all high school students are women; women also form a high percentage of students enrolled at universities.

These laws are in harmony with those of elementary schools. The general goal of kindergartens is to support the family in the upbringing of the child and together with the home, promote the development of the child's personality. Likewise, the role of kindergartens is to offer pre-school education to six-year-olds.
In Finland, kindergartens are a part of a general service system that can be enjoyed by all citizens. Its aim is to offer people different services in different phases of life.

There are over 2,400 kindergartens in Finland that attend to over 100,000 children.
The staff of the kindergarten is organized in the following manner.
In all groups there is at least one kindergarten teacher. In all-day groups there are also two qualified kindergarten nurses. Half-day groups have one kindergarten teacher and one kindergarten nurse. The Day Care Act determines the number of personnel and allows no exceptions. These regulations also apply to private kindergartens. (see page 4.)

For families, the kindergarten is the fundamental pillar of day care, other type of services are offered as well. In family day care, the child minder cares a group of four children, including her own children, at her home. The child minder, who is employed by the municipality, must have completed a day-care course. Furthermore, the home of the child minder is carefully studied to see if it is suitable for children. Her work is supervised and she can get guidance, support and advice from the municipal family day-care supervisor.

For the child minders and for those parents that take care of their children at home, open kindergartens with a qualified kindergarten teacher to organize activities for children are available. In open kindergartens lectures for

STIG VORIA

Children learn to appreciate the 'wonder of growth' by cultivating a small vegetable garden

parents are organized on a frequent basis on subjects of general interest.
The three-family day-care system requires of families more work. Two or three families – at the most four under-school-aged children – can get a child minder from the municipality. The child minder's job is to take care of the children by turn at each of the respective families' homes.
The families prepare the food which the minder warms up. Generally, families receive financial support for food expenditures. This form of day care has become more popular especially among well-educated families that earn good salaries, those that have had difficulty finding a place for their children at a local kindergarten.
The roving kindergarten functions in Finland's sparsely populated areas where distances between families are great. New developments in national day care are taking place constantly. The Finnish government has decided that by 1990 all children under age three should be either able to attend a kindergarten or that the family can opt for home-care support. The latter offers the parent the possibility of taking care of the child until he/she turns three. The law also ensures that the parent will not lose his/her employment during this period. Because there is already a shortage of day-care services, this law will be especially difficult to enforce in big cities. There is skepticism that not enough kindergartens will be built and that not enough kindergarten personnel will be trained by 1990. There is also a threat in many municipalities that even though under-three-year-olds may get a place at a kindergarten, the contrary will happen to those children over age three. The general rule is that if a child has been admitted to a kindergarten, the child is ensured a place until age six. The idea behind this has been to safeguard the permanency in child's day-care relations.

DAY CARE IN TWO LANGUAGES

Finnish and Swedish are Finland's two official languages. Day care is given in the child's mother tongue. Likewise in northern Finland, in Lapland, where Sami is spoken, children have received day care in their language too.

SPECIAL CARE

One of the aims of day care is to sort out different kinds of retardation and personality disturbances as early as possible and offer help immediately. In such cases, a child may require special care and child-care experts together with the child's parents and day-care personnel prepare a rehabilitation plan for the child. Nowadays special care is organized with other children, only the groups are somewhat smaller then.
Play activity forms an important part of the Finnish day-care system. Especially in the Helsinki area and in the suburbs of Espoo and Vantaa, parks for children have been built with outdoor and indoor facilities. These are managed by qualified child supervisors and are open from the morning to the evening. elementary school children, if without company at home, can also attend the park's indoor facilities after school. They can enjoy their own snacks at these parks and in summer they also get a free warm meal. These services are open for everyone, free of charge and whenever a child pleases to go, without pre-notification. ■

Family structure

Families with children 669 000. Two-parent families (including 'open unions') 569 000. Single-parent families 100 000. Of these, mother and child/ren 88 000. Father and child/ren 11 000.

Number of children (%)
1 child 47 %
2 children 39 %
3 children 11 %
4 or more children 3 %

Children under 18:
1 144 000
Children under 7:
450 000
Average number of children per family 1.7.

60 % of families live in towns.
40 % live in the countryside.

The number of people working in farming has decreased, while industry and the services have grown considerably.

Upbringing

The aim of day care is to support parents in their upbringing tasks and, together with the home, advance the development of a child's well-balanced personality.
On its own behalf, day care offers children continual secure, warm human relations and provides a variety of activities that help develop the child, and a favorable learning environment.
According to the child's age and individual needs, day care, taking into account general cultural circumstances, should advance the child's physical, social and emotional development as well as provide support to the child's aesthetic, intellectual, ethical and religious upbringing. In this task, the religious belief of the child's parents or custodians must be respected.
In order to advance the development of the child, day care must support the child's growth into responsibility and peace as well as respect for the environment.

CHILD CARE

A. KINDERGARTENS

1. Standard kindergartens
   - part- and full-time day care
   - 1 to 2-year age groups (12 children)
   - 3 to 6-year age groups (20 children)
   - 6-year-old pre-school groups (25 children)
   - sister and brother groups for ages 1 to 5 (15 children)
2. Kindergartens for school children
   - after school activity for first- and second-grade students (ages 7 to 8)
3. Special day care
   - a kindergarten where there are special groups for those children who need special care and upbringing
4. Open kindergartens
   - for children of different ages as well as adults, geared towards upbringing and guidance activity
5. Roving kindergartens
   - for sparsely populated areas, moreso pre-school activity for 6-year-olds
6. Twenty-four-hour kindergartens and kindergartens open for extended hours
   - for children of those parents with irregular working hours

Kindergatens have qualified staff (see page 3.)

B. FAMILY DAY CARE

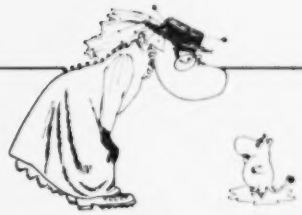
1. Care offered at the child minder's home
2. Three-family day care
3. Group-family day care
   - the special characteristics of these day-care schemes is that they are madeup of small groups

HEIKKI MANTYMAA

Playground activities are well-developed in bigger cities. Children receive a warm meal, free of charge, in parks during the summer.

C. PLAY ACTIVITY

1. Play clubs
2. Playgrounds
3. Toy and play utensils libraries



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The Day-Care/ Pre-School System

- *There are 2 400 municipal kindergartens receiving State subsidy, and these are used by over 100 000 children.*
- *There are also 300 private kindergartens, that are economically supported by the State and are guided by the same principles as the communal kindergartens.*
- *There are nearly 40 000 municipal family day-care homes, used by 90 000 children.*
- *There are 2 000 supervised playparks, used by 30 000 children.*
- *The 6 600 play groups (once or twice a week about three hours) run by the Lutheran Church are used by nearly 100 000 children.*

DAY CARE CHANGES

Kindergartens Reach Children

In square kilometers, Finland is an extensive and sparsely populated country. There are many municipalities in rural areas where people live in small villages and far away from each other.
In many of these communities, the so-called *roving kindergarten* has been conceived.
The object of the roving kindergarten is to bring the nursery school to children of remote villages and thus make them equal – as far as these types of services are concerned – to children living in urban centers.

HELENA PAAVEV

In sparsely populated areas – here in Tornio –, kindergarten teachers 'pack' the kindergarten in their cars and take it to the children.

For these far-flung communities, we need target aims for part-time day care that offer children educational incentives, teach them to adapt and function as a member in a group, to later adjust them to elementary school as well as to enhance their learning abilities.
If children need full-time day care they are generally placed in family day care and then can visit the roving kindergarten together with the child minder.
The maximum amount of children per group is 25 and their ages must be between four and six. The same professional qualifications are required of the staff as those working in any other kindergarten.
The staff of the roving kindergarten is madeup of a teacher, kindergarten nurse or day-care assistant as well as a trainee.
Roving kindergarten personnel reach the children of remote communities with the help of a staff member's car. The child can be transported to the kindergarten by either school transport, a taxi hired by the municipality, or by the car of the child's parents. →

A DAY IN A KINDERGARTEN

Roving kindergartens abide to national nursery school upbringing standards.
For those children that will begin elementary school the following year, the roving kindergarten functions as a pre-school establishment. In this case, the framework of this scheme is madeup according to national guidelines stipulated for six-year-old pre-school pupils, and its natural extension is the initial school teaching curriculum.
The roving kindergarten is the sparsely populated district's only place where retardation and possible school readiness cases are surveyed. Important partners are the child's parents, school teachers, child-health clinic psychologists, special kindergarten teachers and speech therapists.
Because the roving kindergarten abides to the same aspirations and goals of other kindergartens – although its doors are open less hours – this places on the staff great demands in the areas of organization and cooperation. Experience has been positive. ■

The opening hours of the kindergarten are dependent on the working hours of the parents. In some kindergartens the doors may open from five-thirty in the morning and some close at seven in the evening. The number of hours that a child spends daily in a kindergarten should not exceed ten. For parents that are shift workers, 24-hour kindergartens have been conceived.

Kindergartens abide to certain schedules. Eating, outdoor and indoor activity and rest are carried out according to the child's age and needs.

The kindergarten director is responsible for the whole aspect of the institution. The responsibility of the kindergarten teacher falls on her own group with respect to organizing activities and carrying them through. The kindergarten nurse's job is to assist the teacher.
Special kindergarten teachers work either at integrated or separate special groups. Furthermore, municipalities have created a post for roving special kindergarten teachers. Kindergartens also have personnel to manage cafeteria, clothing and janitorial services as well as assistant personnel.

Kindergarten teachers are trained at the Kindergarten Teachers' Institutions and at some teacher training departments at universities. It takes three years to become a kindergarten teacher, after which there is the possibility of specializing in special kindergarten teaching. Kindergarten teachers find jobs easily. Apart from working at kindergartens, they are also employed in family day care and for supervising play activity tasks, at kindergartens for school children as well as at hospitals and care institutions; kindergarten teachers also train day-care personnel as well as work in administrative and organizational tasks.

STIG SJÖBLOM

HELENA PAVANEN

HEIKKI MANTYLÄ

Children's Rights

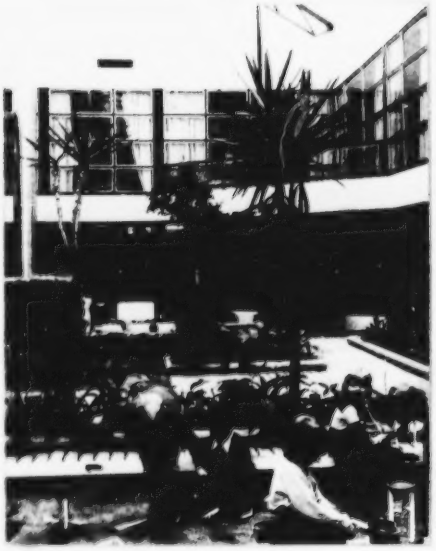
"A child is entitled to a secure and stimulating growing environment and to a harmonious and well-balanced development. A child has a special right to protection."
Children's rights in Finland are embodied in the Child Welfare Act of 1983, a very modern example of legislation. The purpose of child welfare is to secure the rights of the child.

The day begins with breakfast and is followed by moments of play, learning, little tasks, outdoors activities or even small parties. Sometimes children are taken to an excursion. After lunch the younger children take a nap while others engage in quiet activities. The day ends with a small snack and outdoors play.

NEW FACILITIES

In Finland, kindergartens are planned and built for children. Some architects have taken kindergartens as a challenge and the architectural results have been exciting and beautiful. These kindergarten buildings have also turned out to be very practical.
Because the construction pace in the last years has increased considerably, municipalities have also chosen cheaper alternatives: kindergarten facilities have been built on the ground floors of apartment buildings; also, other types of kindergartens have been conceived like the movable kindergarten that, after some changes, can be moved to another area. "The idea behind these kindergartens has been that if the number of children drops in a neighborhood, they can converted to perform other tasks," a kindergarten architect says.
Day care at kindergartens should offer adequate facilities for children as well as be provided with a qualified and large enough staff. Architectual planning has been carried out to conform to the child's dimensions.
In Finland, the National Board of Social Welfare has drawn up guidelines for kindergarten facilities and kindergartens were built according to these standards. In 1988, these binding rules have been lifted in order that municipalities may have more freedom to plan their kindergartens. However, the National Board of Social Welfare has drafted guidelines that architects can use as a model.

The Children's Accident Committee of the Central Union for Child Welfare has carried out with the support of the Environment Ministry research on how functional and safe kindergartens are. In these studies it is emphasized that in Helsinki kindergartens for two- to five-year-old children were twice as safe than other facilities (statistics were compiled from the Aurora Hospital).
Problem spaces at kindergartens were mostly halls where doors opened frequently. These caused accidents and dangerous situations. At the playground of the kindergarten, safety was mainly undermined by poorly placed playground equipment and poor lighting; in winter children play outdoors also during dark late-afternoon hours. ■



PAWO JANS

Winter garden brings summer to the long and dark Finnish winter. A kindergarten in the city of Varkaus.

STIG NORDVIK

This kindergarten in Helsinki is located on the gound floor of a normal apartment house, close to the homes of the children.

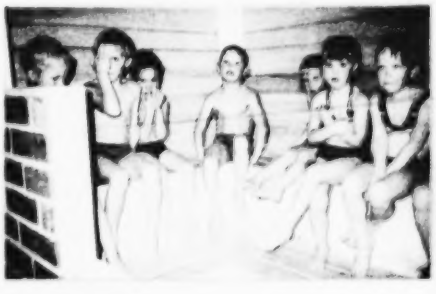
STIG NORDVIK

Pikku prinssi (the Little Prince) is an example of the carefully planned Finnish kindergartens.

When a kindergarten is planned and built and facilities are well-suited, we can simultaneously prevent accidents to children. Accident-prevention is also dependent on child supervision and guidance as well as how the activity of the kindergarten group is carried through. With the help of good space planning, we can lessen prohibitions as well as constant supervision of children; this allows the kindergarten staff to gear their resources on more meaningful tasks. In secure facilities children have more independence to carry out their activities as they please.

STIG NORDVIK

The size of the kindergartens varies: the smallest are for 10–12 children, and the day-care centers can have up to 100 children. A kindergarten in Raisio.



TAPIO RINHATTI

Some kindergartens that are open for 24-hours in a day even have a sauna.

8

ASSOCIATION IS ACTIVE

Anja Valtonen, President of the Association of Kindergarten Teachers is also the Chairperson of the Board of the Savonlinna Opera Festival. The festival is celebrated in July in the medieval castle of Olavinlinna and is frequented by around 100 000 visitors.

The President of the Association of Kindergarten Teachers, Kindergarten Director *Anja Valtonen*, heads an organization that has around 10,000 members.

"Well-trained kindergarten staff is the cornerstone of day care", says Valtonen. "Those that are responsible for day care are in an important position to carry through the upbringing aims stipulated for such establishments. Their job is to create for each child under their care a good foundation for growth."

In Finland, kindergarten teachers have been the quantitative and qualitative pillar of day care since its first steps as it was a trained kindergarten teacher who started kindergarten activity already in 1888.

"Kindergarten teachers have received good professional training," Valtonen continues. "At this moment, it takes three years of schooling at an institution to become a kindergarten teacher after one has finished high school. The suitability of a person that wants to become a kindergarten teacher is measured in many ways."

"Because new, demanding challenges are placed on day-care work constantly," she stresses, "it is therefore important to invest in the educational development of kindergarten teachers."

Valtonen is proud to state that Finnish kindergarten teachers believe in their work and want to develop it. They are constantly lining up for the latest results from national and international research and experiments.

Municipal kindergartens are mainly composed by the children of the parents working outside home. The kindergarten cannot nor should ever attempt to replace the home, but offer secure and warm human relations during day-care hours. To achieve the latter, the professional background of kindergarten teachers and qualified educators is helpful.

"On traveling around the word I have sometimes been faced by a question on why in Finland children begin school at age seven," Valtonen continues. "Our pre-school education begins in conjunction with day care and these establishments function as bridges to elementary schools."

"However, children are not taught at day-care and pre-school facilities to read or add," she explains, "but one of the most important goals of day care is to create readiness for learning by motivating children to ask, observe and experiment."

"Kindergarten teachers work constantly for a better tomorrow," Valtonen concludes. "We teach children to use their hands, hearts and intelligence." ■

The Association of Kindergarten Teachers forms part of the academic union organization, AKAVA. The object of the Association of Kindergarten Teachers is, among other matters, to secure the legal position of kindergarten teachers, improve salary levels and working conditions, develop professional workshops and take care of national and international contacts with other kindergarten teachers and unions.

The Association of Kindergarten Teachers has around 10,000 members. Ninety-four percent of all kindergarten teachers are organized.

The Association of Kindergarten Teachers is mainly made up of young people. 70% of the members are under 32 years, 96% of the members are women and 4% men.

Further information: The Association of Kindergarten Teachers, Akavatalo, Rautatielaisenkatu 6, SF-00520 Helsinki, Finland. Tel.: (358-0) 15 021.

The Finnish Toy-Agreement

Toy entrepreneurs and authorities have agreed to work in cooperation for the development of Finnish toy and play culture. This is written down into the Toy Agreement that took force in 1987, where the entrepreneurs have also expressed their wish to refrain from manufacturing, importing and selling war toys.

This agreement did symbolically destroy the war toys. A follow-up study was conducted in 1988 on the experiences the entrepreneurs and day-care personnel had of the Agreement, and preliminary information is already available. It is quite evident that the recommendation to refrain from importation and manufacturing of war toys has been satisfactorily followed. Many importation businesses and retail sellers tell that the Agreement only consolidated the earlier practice: the most blatant war toys never did reach Finland. Still, many educators find problematic the toys that are not included in the sphere of the Agreement but which they consider harmful or frightening to children. There has been a lively public discussion on such toys.

The participation of educators in the discussion tells us about a sincere concern. Public discussion in the mass media, as well as in parents' meetings in day-care and at schools, is evidently a better means to guide the selection of toys than the various types of bans that are always suggested in such a discussion. Many entrepreneurs as well as day-care professionals quoted the change in the attitudes of the parents themselves as one of the most important outcomes of the Agreement; parents had become more interested in toys and considered more thoroughly what kind of toys to buy. No one seems to need war toys. The study made it quite clear that to sell them is not indispensable for importers and shopkeepers. Many of the respondents were of the opinion that war toys and games do not belong to childhood, at least not to the girls. Many emphasized that these games have always been played but nowadays they seem to have become more violent than before. Adventure and exitement have been replaced by purposeful hurting of the other child.

DAY CARE IN HELSINKI

"Helsinki requires large as well as small kindergartens," says Department Head Anitti Isokallio of Helsinki Day-Care Department

The number of working mothers with small children in Helsinki is the highest in Western Europe. Women who live in Finland's capital city have received a good education and there is a lot of work available. However, living and housing are expensive.

"Women who live in Helsinki won't in the future stay home to take care of their children even though home-care support is being developed," the Head of Helsinki Day-Care Department *Anitti Isokallio* believes. "Generally women want to work outside the home."

Work has always been important to the Finns. However, the traditional work role model is changing. According to Isokallio, people want to invest their time in child care. The parents of small children will begin to use their rights to shorten working hours.

In the Helsinki area there are around 36,000 under-school-aged children. This number has remained stable for the last decade.

There are presently facilities at day-care establishments for a bit under 24,000 children. In 1988, this satisfied 83% of full-time day-care needs. According to a recently passed law, municipalities have to secure a place in day care for under-three-year-old children. This means that Helsinki is forced to build new kindergarten facilities at a rapid pace.

In the beginning of 1988, Helsinki had all in all around 300 kindergartens and some 25 new kindergartens were built. In 1989 a further 22 will be built. During this two-year period, six playgrounds will also be completed.

There is a general trend today to build small kindergartens. Around half of the new kindergartens were planned for two groups, or for total of 32 children.

"Building costs are high in Helsinki," Isokallio explains. "Furthermore, Finland's harsh winters impose demanding construction standards on buildings. Indoor facilities are needed in great amounts because outdoor play activity is shorter in winter."

According to 1988 standards, construction costs reached between 8,000 to 11,000 Finnmarks per each day-care place. Operational expenses per day-care place reached 3,000 to 3,500 Finnmarks per month. Eighty percent of these latter expenses went to salaries.

The State subsidizes municipal day care according to the economic solvency of the community. The minimum is 32 percent and the maximum 66 percent of all expenses. The parents pay only a part of the real costs; their net income and number of family members influence the calculation of the payment category. There are at present seven categories ranging from 0 to 665 marks per month for whole-day care for under three year-olds, and from 0 to 1096 marks for children from three to five. The maximum payment for children from six to ten is 880 marks.

Kindergarten needs have been best met in the older neighbourhoods of cities. Kindergarten services have lagged behind in newly built suburbs or in those presently under construction.

In newly built neighborhoods, depending on how many children there are, the municipality usually implements various day-care schemes to meet the needs of the area. For example, the concept of home kindergarten means that facilities on the ground floor of an apartment building are built to offer such services. When day-care needs decline, the home-kindergarten can be turned into social welfare apartments. Pre-fabricated kindergartens are another fast solution to meet day-care needs. In principle, these type of kindergartens can be moved from one neighborhood to another.

"However, because moving costs are so high," Isokallio explains, "up to now no such steps have been taken."

The cost of pre-fabricated kindergartens are 15 to 20% lower than those of permanent kindergartens. The appraisal of home kindergartens are dependent on the general value of apartment buildings.

In the future, a city block will be responsible for organizing day-care services. According to Isokallio, it is hoped that the child's daily living environment will thus be closer to the child's home. In some city neighborhoods, there have been joint construction projects by different branches of municipal administration. In these types of setups, there may be a library, school, kindergarten, health station, social-security establishments, the post office... The combination possibilities are endless.

"The aim is that each area should have a central kindergarten, small kindergartens, home kindergartens, group-family care and child minding as well as a playground," Isokallio believes. "This permits a sufficient amount of different day-care options." →

Art education – including music, reading and visual arts – is an essential part of activities in all kindergartens.

All in all, there are 4,000 child minders working in family day care in Helsinki. 1,200 of these are on the municipal pay roll. The number of child minders is not expected to grow from the present level. Isokallio feels that family day care is an especially effective form of day care for infant children.

In the development of child minding, the municipality has, among other schemes, tried out group-family care. In other words, the city rents the facilities that are run by two child minders so that the child minder does not have to take care of the children at her home.

"By 1990, Helsinki will be able to ensure for under-three-year-olds a place at a day-care center but this aim will be carried out at the expense of some three-to-six-year-olds," Isokallio says disappointed. "For example, because some older infants will have to give up their places to under-three-year-olds, continuity will be undermined," she adds. "This is an unwelcomed aspect as far as the child's educational development is concerned."

In 1988, home-care support in Helsinki reached 1,700 Finnmarks per month. "There is pressure in Helsinki to raise this amount," Isokallio says. "Up to now, we don't have reliable information on how many parents will opt for municipal day care or home-care support. In the beginning, when these two forms of day care are implemented, there will be a certain amount of overlapping." MT

Further information: Helsinki Social Welfare Department, Children's Day Care, Toinen linja 4 A, SF-00530 Helsinki, Finland, tel. (358-0) 7321.

1860 *There were a few Kindergartens in Finland and they used the Fröbelian method.*

1882 *Hanna Rothman graduates as kindergarten teacher at the Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus in Berlin.*

1888 *Hanna Rothman founded a private kindergarten for working-class children in Helsinki (Fröbel-anstalt i Helsingfors). Kindergarten activity begins in Finland.*

1892 *Kindergarten teacher training begins.*

1892 *Universal suffrage proclaimed in Finland.*

1906 *Summer-kindergarten activity begins.*

1908 *Play activity at hospitals begins.*

1912 *Summer camps for children get started.*

1913 *Helsinki kindergartens get own pediatrician.*

1917 *Finland gains independence. During the first years of independence, the number of orphan children was considerable. This factor lead to the founding of child welfare activity.*

1919 *Kindergarten teachers get organized.*
The Association of Kindergarten Teachers in Finland is founded.
– The first nationwide inspection of kindergartens was carried out.
– The first kindergarten for school children opens its doors in Helsinki.

1921 *The Act on Compulsory Education comes into force.*

1922 *The first child health clinic was founded in Helsinki. This was the beginning of a nationwide maternal as well as child health clinic network that got legal status in 1944. Thanks to the work of the child health clinics, infant mortality in Finland is one of the lowest in the world.*

1925 *Child guidance clinic activity begins.*

1926 *Special day care begins.*

1930 *Kindergartens change from private to public hands during the 1930's. Already in 1931, Helsinki had 28 kindergartens.*

1931 *Home-helper activity begins.*

1937 *The child welfare act comes into force*
The Central Union for Child Welfare, an umbrella organization to oversee child welfare, was founded.

1939 –44 *During World War II, kindergarten activity came to a temporary halt. Tens of thousands of Finnish children were evacuated to Sweden and Denmark.*

1940's *Finland changes from an agricultural to an industrial-based society.*
– During this decade, some 100 kindergartens were built.

1940 *The Lutheran Church starts up club activities: For a few hours once or twice a week, children could now attend clubs for boys and girls. Incentives were encouraged for childeren at home. This activity expanded in the 1960's and, in the 1980's, around 100,000 children from ages 4 to 6 attended youth clubs organized by the Lutheran Church.*

1945 *After World War II, an important national reconstruction effort begins. Women seek employment outside the home. A post-war baby boom creates a big demand for kindergartens.*

1950's *The number of women employed outside the home increased rapidly.*
– The demand for kindergartens grew many-fold with respect to supply. In the 1950's a little under 200 kindergartens were built throughout Finland.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Lecturer Eeva Huttunen has done her doctoral thesis on cooperation between the home and kindergarten. The individual viewpoint of parents and children on day care have been the object of her research work. Huttunen is presently conducting a research on education practices in day care that asks: When do problems arise at kindergartens?

Joensuu University researchers Eeva Huttunen and Mikko Ojala explain that Finnish scientific early childhhood studies are young. Their roots stretch back to the turn of the 1960's and 1970's. Research is undergoing a dynamic period and growing at an ever-increasing rate. In the 1980's these studies have shifted their emphasis to listening to the needs of the family and educators.

Lecturer *Eeva Huttunen* says that the foundation of a child's personality is molded during early childhood. In an evercomplex world we need research on what child needs really are. This way, the significance of early childhood education with respect to adulthood can be underlined.
According to the researcher, the most important challenge of research is to build a scientific, steady theoretical base for studies on early childhood education.
"In the beginning, Finnish research on early childhood was strongly influenced by studies from the Soviet Union and the United States," Huttunen explains. "In the 1970's the main emphasis was, among other aspects, on school-oriented teaching programs at day-care establishements."
"Upbringing is dependent on culture as well as life, and static established models cannot be transferred from one country to another," she continues. "In international research we have obtained a basis for estimation, and we are finding today a more national approach for early childhood education."
"In my opinion, day care should be developed to meet the demands of the parents and especially through the viewpoint of the child. Early childhood education integrates a child to two worlds: the home and day care."
The basis of early childhood education – according to Huttunen – is the love that unites both the educator and child.
"We should begin to carry out more research on the educator," Huttunen says. "The personal development of the educator is important in order to establish favorable conditions that would respect the child's growth process."
The researcher would want to see more international cooperation in research. In her opinion, Finnish research could well be offered elsewhere.
"In a general view, the child's integration process at a day-care establishment is carried through according to the needs of

1960's *Finland experiences internal migration from the rural to southern urban centers. This migration, which occurred during a period of two decades, was unsurpassed in Europe. Migratory push to the south also created many social problems. The most acute of these were shortages in housing and in kindergartens for the children of mothers working full-time.*
– Over 400 kindergartens were built during the 1960's.

1963 *Helsinki kindergartens get their first permanent speech therapist.*

1973 *The child day care act comes into force.*
– Nationally, there were around 51,000 places in kindergartens and roughly 5,500 places in family day care.
The law placed on day care clear quantitative aims and required municipalities to provide day care of such content and extent as corresponds to the needs in their area.
– Kindergartens were built at a rapid pace.

1983 *The day care act stipulates aims for upbringing children. The safeguarding of the high standards of kindergartens developed at an ever-increasing rate.*
– There were almost 2,000 kindergartens and over 150,000 day-care places for children. Finland had 445,000 children ages 0 to 6.

1984 *The new child welfare act and child custody and right to access act come into force. The Child Welfare Act is considered to be the most advanced in the world. In the Child Custody Act, the upbringing of the child is looked after and corporal punishment of children forbidden.*

1985 *To ensure that small children are well looked after, a law on home-care support was enacted. The law requires municipalities by 1990 to either offer day-care services or home-support payment.*

1987 *An agreement between manufacturers and importers*

According to Mikko Ojala, Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Education, internationalization is a challenge to Finnish early childhood studies. "We are conducting these studies with an open mind and we offer our experiences through joint cooperation."

the home, which is an advantage to us," she explains. "For example, we have our own viewpoint on how cooperation between the home and kindergarten should work: kindergartens listen to parents and do not attempt to 'educate' them." PS

Assistant Professor *Mikko Ojala* is pleased that today families with children and home education form an important part of early childhood research. In the 1970's, most of these studies were confined to pre-school education at the kindergarten. At this moment in these two fields, the role of the educator is especially attractive to a researcher.

"At the turn of last decade, the role of follow-up studies has been to see how kindergarten teachers develop throughout a long period of time," Assistant Professor Ojala explains. "We have compiled data from research on such questions, and it seems that the motives behind becoming a kindergarten teacher have remained unaltered – when compared to school teachers."

"Independence, creativity and the possiblity to help children and families are the main sources of encouragement for selecting kindergarten teaching as profession," he continues. "The results were surprising because society has changed and people have become more career-oriented and measure work satisfaction through salary and recognition. For the image of the profession, this result was very promising."

Internationally speaking, humanities and educational sciences lag, according to Ojala, behind other disciplines.

"However, these fields are now influenced by international cooperation and interaction, sort of give and take," Assistant Professor Ojala explains. In my opinion, this imposes an important challenge on us researchers. And it is dangerous to decide beforehand what are the ideas that we should be marketing from Finland to others."

"Because these studies are constantly being developed, their emphasis is difficult to assess," he says. "Let's keep an open mind and share experiences through cooperation."

"Many scientific disciplines today gear their research on under-school-aged children," Assistant Professor Ojala says. "In this disarrangement, early childhood researchers should find their identity. This can be attained by so-called pedagogic research," he adds.

"Because an ever-increasing amount of persons are becoming involved in child education, we have to make sure that pedagogy abides to high standards and the kindergarten staff has received good professional training," he explains. "In my opinion, this should be the basis of early childhood studies." PS

Further information: University of Joensuu, PB 111, SF-80101 Joensuu, tel. (358-73) 1511

of toys and the National Board of Social Welfare ensures that war toys will disappear almost entirely from shop shelves in Finland.

1988 *Finnish kindergartens celebrate centennial anniversary.*
– There are around 200,000 kindergarten places, nationally (for 45 % of all Finnish children); the number of children in the age group of 0 to 6 years is 440,000.
– In the 1980's, around 62,000 children are born annually. The national birth rate is speculated to drop in the upcoming years; for example, by 1990 an estimated 59,000 children will be born on a yearly basis.

2000 *According to different predictions, the number of children in the 0 to 6 age group will drop and reach 374,000. There are around 300,000 day-care places. This means that each child will be ensured a place at a local kindergarten. However, parents will be able to decide the most adequate day care for their children, if at kindergartens or at home.*

Child Welfare

The status of the child in private law is defined in the Child Custody and Right of Access Act of 1983. Irrespective of their birth, children are ensured equal status under law. The legislation distinguishes between custody and guardianship and defines the child's right of access to both parents in the case of divorce. Further, the law defines the aims of child custody and a good upbringing, and also prohibits corporal punishment and other humiliating treatment. Thus Finland, like the other Nordic countries, is one of the few lands forbidding bodily chastisement of the child. Reform of the legislation relating to children got under way in Finland in the mid-1970s (e.g. the laws on paternity, child maintenance, child maintenance security and adoption).

The Unique Finnish Baby Box

Each mother of a new baby in Finland is entitled to a 'maternity grant' from the government. This can be raised in cash (580 marks in 1988) or in kind in the form of a 'baby box'.
This box contains basic clothing and bedding for the new baby and a whole number of baby preparations. It is worth very much more than the cash sum.
With a first baby, the box provides an excellent start, but many more experienced mothers also choose it just because it is such good value.

Maternity Leave and Maternity Allowances

Society helps parents through a maternity leave decreed by law and subsidized in cash. The current maternity leave is 263 days (exclud. Sundays and public holidays), 30 of which are taken before the due date. Maternity leave is lengthened by 60 days, if babies are two or more. The parental benefit is being paid also to adoptive parents for 234 days.
Parents can also share the leave, the father can use up to 105 of the above number of days to help with the new arrival. Fathers are in any case entitled to 12 days 'paternity leave' when the baby is born. Anyone on statutory maternity/paternity leave is paid an allowance. In 1988 the minimum rate was 48,40 marks a day. Anyone in paid employment and earning less than 29 040 marks a year is paid 80 % of their normal earnings (above 96 240 marks a year less than 50 %). The maternity/paternity allowance is taxable. The government and employers meet the cost jointly.

FACTS ABOUT FINLAND

- *area 338 127 square kilometers*
- *population 4.9 million (15.8 persons/ sq km)*
- *capital Helsinki*
- *languages – Finnish and Swedish*
- *religion: Evangelic-Lutheran 90%, Orthodox 1.2%*
- *currency: Mark (4.1 USD)*
- *independence: December 6th, 1917*

Population increase in Finland belongs to the lowest in the world. Although infant mortality has been reduced to the minimum, birth rate has gone down even faster. From the 70's, the birth rate has leveled to 13–14/1000. The net growth of population has also been influenced by a strong emigration. For example, 270 000 persons, which means around five percent of the population, have moved to Sweden after the Second World War. Migration in Finland takes place from the North to the South and from the countryside to the cities.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Finland, like other Scandinavian countries, provides security, social stability and high standard of living for citizens and visitors. If measured by the GNP, Finland places as the 14th country in the world. Median monthly income of the Finns is 6,300 marks (1986). After the Second World War, the State began to build a social security system to safeguard the basic needs of all citizens. This system is nearly completed: there are national and work pensions, insurances for sickness, unemployment and disability, health care services that are completely or partly covered by the State, housing subsidy, family allowances, etc. This system, stipulated in various laws, is complemented by trade union agreements. Social services are provided to all citizens according to their needs, not according to their wealth. Day-care services should be available for all families but this goal has not yet been reached.

EDUCATION

The educational level of the Finns is high. Illiteracy is practically non-existant. Expansion of education opportunities in the 1960's have brought professional and all-round education within the reach of the entire population. Elementary school begins at seven and is preceeded by pre-school education in day care. Compulsory education is divided into six-year lower basic school and three-year upper basic school. Secondary education went through a substantial reform in the 80's. The proportion of university students in respective age groups is higher than in any

Moomintrolls were created by Tove Jansson, world famous Finnish writer and illustrator. Their popularity is evident in the 15 000 letters that she recieves annually from her readers.
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other country. And the network of universities is among the densest in Europe (20 universities). The biggest of them, the University of Helsinki with 25 000 students, celebrates its 350th anniversary in 1990.

Finnish export was almost solely based on wood-processing products until the 50's, and they still lead the export markets. However, Finland is nowadays also the leading constructor of ice-breakers and luxury cruisers in the world. Besides, electronic and electric industries are top quality. Chemical industry is nowadays also of great importance.

Around seventy-one percent of Finland's area is covered by forests. No wonder that wood is called Finnish "green gold". Thus, paper belongs to one of the basic products and many of the world's leading newspapers and journals are printed on Finnish paper.

A clear rhythm of seasons is typical to Finnish climate. We have four seasons: a snowy winter, spring that advances rapidly, warm but short summer and cold and colorful autumn.

Finland still has clean and rich nature. In summer Finland is the dream land of a vacationer with its 200 000 lakes and ponds to swimin. The southwestern part of the country, formed by 80 000 islands and skerries, is a paradise for boat-owners. Northern part of Finland, Lapland is famous for its natural beauty, its small mountains, and for being the home of Santa Claus. ■

Finland lies furthest to the east of the Scandinavian countries, yet this nation remains firmly committed to western style democracy. With a population of merely 5 million in an area larger than Britain, there is privacy and elbowroom for everyone.

HANNU POHJANPALO

Helsinki, Daughter of the Baltic, has frequently been the scene of big international sailing races.

Cover photo: Children presenting an old Finnish play 'The King of Petsamo' in the 100-years-old "Onnela" (Happiness) kindergarten. Photo: Studio Universal/Mona Mannerheimo.

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The Central Union for Child Welfare

The Central Union for Child Welfare in Finland is a nationwide coordination organization for associations and local authorities working for the good of children, young people and families with children.
The Union was founded in 1937 as an umbrella organization to coordinate the whole field of child welfare. In 1988 the number of members is 126, of whom 80 are associations and 46 local authorities.
The Union is a member of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, OMEP.

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